

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 10, 2008

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

We are writing in support of Wisconsin's waiver request to expand its BadgerCare Plus program to include health care coverage for uninsured childless adults.


In January 2006, Governor Doyle announced the first phase of this strategy, BadgerCare Plus, which provides health insurance for all kids. Wisconsin implemented that program with your approval on February 1, 2008. Wisconsin is now proposing a second phase that will provide affordable health care coverage to low-income, uninsured childless adults for implementation on January 1, 2009.


This proposed waiver will ensure that 98% of Wisconsin residents have access to affordable health care coverage and will provide coverage to a chronically uninsured population. Childless adults (ages 19 to 64) would qualify for BadgerCare Plus if their gross income was below 200% of the federal poverty level. The benefit for childless adults will provide access to basic health care services, including primary and preventive care and generic drugs, but will be less comprehensive than traditional Medicaid. Individuals would not be eligible if they had health insurance coverage or access to health insurance coverage in the previous 12 months. To identify and address chronic health issues, Wisconsin will require that each childless adult complete a health needs assessment. Furthermore, Wisconsin will require that each enrollee receive a comprehensive physical exam within one year of joining the program. This innovation is unique to Wisconsin Medicaid.

This proposal, which we understand to be budget neutral, will allow Wisconsin the flexibility to make coverage and benefit decisions which best meet the need of beneficiaries. By emphasizing preventive and primary health care options, we believe this proposal will significantly improve upon the services that are currently available.

We encourage you to approve Wisconsin's request for a waiver of federal law to expand BadgerCare Plus to low-income childless adults. This expansion will provide access to health care coverage to an estimated 81,000 chronically uninsured Wisconsin residents with little or no access to health care. We appreciate your timely consideration of Wisconsin's waiver request.

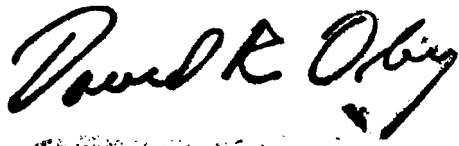
Sincerely,

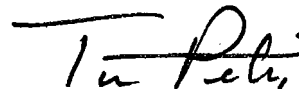

Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress


Paul Ryan
Member of Congress

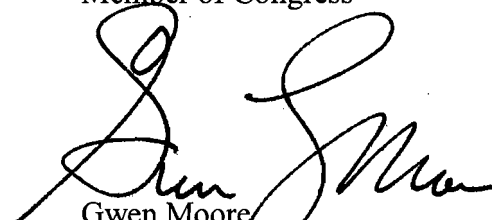

Herb Kohl
United States Senate



Russ Feingold
United States Senate


David Obey
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Ron Kind
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Steve Kagen, M.D.
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